



**OUR MISSION**

*Educate and advocate to protect and conserve the native wildlife and its enjoyment by the public in the Upper Henry's Fork Watershed.*

# Yellowstone Pronghorn: Restoring Ancient Paths

BY KELSIE DOUGHERTY

Pronghorn “antelope” have roamed the western plains for centuries. Having evolved to outrun the now extinct North American cheetah, they are the second fastest land mammal in the world. The pronghorn we see today are relics of the Pleistocene – the sole survivors of a very diverse family. Some ancient pronghorn species had as many as six horns!

Once abundant across Yellowstone National Park, by 2004 park biologists estimated that fewer than 200 remained in the northern park herd. Habitat fragmentation and fences adjacent to the park have impaired the ability of the herd to follow their historic migration routes north and west of the park. While pronghorn can sprint up to 60 mph, they are not built to jump and have difficulty negotiating fences. For Yellowstone pronghorn, fences along their migration routes are a major barrier – blocking access to winter habitat and isolating them from other regional herds.

*“For Yellowstone pronghorn, fences along their migration routes are a major barrier.”*

In response, in 2010 National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) began a collaborative community engagement program to restore pronghorn migration paths. NPCA works with private landowners and public land managers to remove or modify fences to make them wildlife friendly. Raising the bottom wire or rung of a fence allows pronghorn to crawl underneath while ensuring the fence still meets its intended purpose such as containing livestock. This approach allows pronghorn to access historic winter habitat that was previously unavailable,

while still ensuring that the needs of private landowners are met.

In just over a decade we have removed or modified over 40 miles of fences, collaborated with dozens of landowners, and engaged over 1050 volunteers – including student groups, veterans, and local community members. In turn, Yellowstone pronghorn populations are increasing. Today the herd has more than doubled as the animals access larger portions of their historic winter habitat in park adjacent landscapes. However, there is still work to be done to reconnect Yellowstone pronghorn with other regional herds and ensure their long-term survival. Restoring the historic migration route west of the park in Montana and Idaho will reconnect Yellowstone pronghorn to existing regional herds and winter range. Visit [npca.org/pronghorn](http://npca.org/pronghorn) to learn more.

*Kelsie grew up farming and ranching in rural Montana—often feeding bum lambs or milking dairy cows before and after school. She enjoys skiing, hunting, and exploring off the beaten path with her husband and two labs. Kelsie leads NPCA’s collaborative effort to work with landowners to restore Yellowstone pronghorn migration routes in the Greater Yellowstone Area.*



*Photo by Patty Pickett*



*Students with Ecology Project International remove derelict fence in Paradise Valley, MT*

## OUR VISION

The iconic wildlife of the Upper Henrys Fork Watershed will thrive in connected and sustainable habitats because citizens treasure diverse and healthy wildlife populations and understand what is required for their continued success.



# Fish and Game Crews Radio Collar Elk and Pronghorn Throughout South-Central Idaho

PRESS RELEASE BY TERRY THOMPSON, REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER | IDAHO FISH & GAME

Several elk and pronghorn were recently radio collared in south-central Idaho to aid biologists in tracking their locations and seasonal movements.

Since mid-July, Fish and Game staff have been conducting low-level helicopter flights across south-central Idaho in an attempt to put radio collars on antlerless elk and pronghorn. These flights ranged from the Sawtooth and Wood River Valleys and into the Little Wood River basin and the Little Camas region.

Eight cow elk were radio collared in the Camas Prairie and Little Camas region. All were darted and anesthetized by a Fish and Game biologist from a helicopter. The elk were radio collared to allow Fish and Game biologists to track their movements relative to private property and potential for crop depredation. The collars will remain active for two and a half years.

*“Radio collars are a very effective and efficient way for biologists to track wildlife across time and space.”*

In late July, 25 pronghorn were radio collared across south-central Idaho. The collared pronghorn, now numbering 50, will be monitored over the next few years to document winter and summer ranges as well as seasonal movement patterns. The pronghorn were captured using a net-gun fired by a Fish and Game biologist from a low flying helicopter. The pronghorn were collared in the Sawtooth Valley near Smiley Creek, in the Wood River Valley near Ketchum, Hailey and Bellevue, Little Wood River drainage, Camas Prairie, Anderson Ranch Reservoir, and Little Camas regions. The collars will remain active for two years.

Radio collars are a very effective and efficient way for biologists to track wildlife across time and space. If found, collars should be returned to the nearest Fish and Game office.

Affiliate of the Idaho Wildlife Federation



A helicopter lifts off with a crew of biologists working on a project to radio collar pronghorn | IDFG



A pronghorn doe is released after a radio collar is placed by Fish and Game biologists | IDFG



## FREE VIRTUAL EVENTS

HFWA is partnering with Greater Yellowstone Coalition (GYC) to offer a **Meet the Scientists** series - free virtual events via Zoom featuring regional experts on wildlife. The first event in July featured an expert from Department of Fish and Game on their grizzly bear work.

Go to the Events page on our website (see Page 4 for URL) for information on upcoming programs.

# New Restroom Murals Draw Visitors to Henry's Lake

Local organizations, Henry's Fork Wildlife Alliance and Henry's Lake Foundation, helped fund this project at south Henry's Lake. If you haven't already seen the new wildlife murals in the restroom vaults, come check them out.

EXCERPTS FROM PRESS RELEASE BY BRUCE HALLMAN | BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

**“I'VE BEEN IN MANY CAMPGROUND BATHROOMS. THIS ONE IS THE BEST BY FAR!”**

Last fall, the installation began for a new double vault toilet on an increasingly well-used BLM site at Henry's Lake. Located near the western entrance to Yellowstone National Park, Henry's Lake is one of Idaho's great high mountain lakes. In fact, Henry's Fork of the Snake River originates at the outlet of this famous lake, just under the Continental Divide between Idaho and Montana. Henry's Lake is the kind of place that anglers dream about—it is considered one of the finest trout fisheries in the West. And now, they might just come for the restrooms.

**“WISH MORE CAMP RESTROOMS LOOKED LIKE THIS!”**

Surrounded by private, state and BLM-managed public lands, this scenic destination is gaining attention and usage. The BLM portion of the south shore includes boat access and camping spots.



Last year saw improvements on the road, fence work and a new restroom. Now the new restroom vaults are filled with inspiring aquatic scenes of fish and birdlife in the area.

**“ART IS NEEDED EVERYWHERE.”**

Georgia-turned-Idaho artist Helen Seay, now living in the small town of Driggs, created the restroom makeover this summer.

BLM's Monica Zimmerman, Outdoor Recreation Planner for the Upper Snake Field Office says more improvements are coming, all aimed at making the facilities at the Henry's Lake south shore even better.

Seay hopes visitors' surprise encounters with the aquatic scenes of fish and bird life will inspire all who “see them to make a difference in their own bit of conservation.”



# CHAMPIONS FOR WILDLIFE

We are the only citizens organization devoted solely to protecting healthy wildlife populations in the Upper Henry's Fork Watershed.



## The Sandhills of September

BY CHARLIE LANSCHÉ

You can hear the rattling, throaty bugle of a sandhill crane from miles away. Their primordial call is one of the most distinctive sounds in nature. And each year in September, thousands of these 4-foot tall crimson and gray colored birds band together in the lowland valleys, wetlands and prime agricultural areas of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem in preparation for their long migration to wintering grounds in New Mexico, Arizona and Mexico.

As early autumn approaches listen for their unmistakable calls. And watch for cranes in flight, near night roosts in shallow wetland areas and feeding together in the rich farmlands of the Teton Valley, Star Valley, and upper Snake River Plain.

*Island Park resident Charlie Lansche is a landscape and wildlife photographer. View more of his photos at <http://www.cmlanscheimages.com>.*



(Charlie Lansche - C. M. Lansche Images)



(Charlie Lansche - C. M. Lansche Images)

### Calendar Announcement

Upcoming topics for our free online speaker series:

**The Amazing Sand Creek Desert** (tentative date August 26)

**Migrations in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem** (tentative date September 30).

Go to [henrysforkwildlifealliance.org/events](http://henrysforkwildlifealliance.org/events) for information to be posted soon.

Scan with QR Code Reader app on your smart phone to go straight to our website:



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